## Insights into Evaluating Systems of Care: Lessons Learned from Phase V Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful SOC Evaluation Teams...</th>
<th>Common Obstacles Faced</th>
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| ... attend to Evaluation Requirements while balancing system factors | • There will be paperwork delays.  
• Working within a larger system is often difficult.  
• System changes often impact enrollment and fulfillment of requirements.  
• Changes from initial logic model will occur. |
| ... stay “in the loop” proactively | • Staying in the loop is difficult, especially if the project staff and the evaluation team are not housed within the same building/agency. |
| ... attend SOC meetings | • Attending a lot of meetings is time consuming.  
• SOC work is not “business as usual;” evaluation and project staff are not likely to understand how they must work together in order for the project to be successful. |
| ... act as a “critical friend” | • Project staff generally want to hear the “good” news, and not the “bad” news.  
• Program change requires that both the good and bad news are reported. |
| ... interact & partner with families & community | • Working with input from others is not always easy.  
• There will likely be many delays in every process.  
• This is new territory for many, so stakeholder input is limited.  
• Expect analysis paralysis: no one takes the initiative without consensus.  
• Consensus is elusive. |
| ... recognize that they are the experts | • Not everyone understands the importance of evaluation.  
• Evaluation is not a “common language,” so others need to be trained in evaluation. |

## Lessons Learned & Recommendations for Evaluation Teams

- Work to understand the current system and its history
- Involve Project Staff in evaluation from the beginning
  - Likewise, involve Evaluation Staff in the SOC
- Stay in constant contact with Project Staff
- Recognize that this evaluation is different
- Help project stakeholders take ownership of evaluation
- Disseminate data often, in many different formats
- Provide formative feedback to improve SOC as often as possible (empowerment evaluations are important)
- Be willing to revise evaluation based on community feedback
- Develop solid, trusting relationships with stakeholders
- Be constructive, cooperative partners
- Utilize and promote the evaluation expertise of the team
- Train (and re-train) service providers on the evaluation